

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**18 CCEM ISSUES PAPER**

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Commonwealth Secretariat is organising its 18<sup>th</sup> triennial Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (18CCEM) from 27-31 August 2012 in Port Louis, Mauritius. The theme for the Conference is: ***“Education in the Commonwealth: Bridging the gap as we accelerate towards achieving the Internationally Agreed Goals.”***

The overall objective of the conference is to enable Commonwealth Ministers of Education and senior officials to consider and discuss key education issues and challenges being faced in the Commonwealth as related to the main conference theme. The theme will also provide a focus for discussions at the 18CCEM parallel fora as follows: Stakeholders’ Forum (Civil Society, Academia and Private Sector); Youth Forum; Teachers’ Forum; and Post Secondary and Higher Education Leaders’ Forum.

The Secretariat develops an Issues Paper in the lead up to every CCEM as a key background paper to draw attention to the intended focus and scope of substantive issues which the conference will address.

**PREPARING THE 18CCEM ISSUES PAPER:**

The Consultant is requested to develop a paper that will provide a focus for Commonwealth Education Ministers’ discussions and also provide an overarching Framework to guide the development of the programmes for 18CCEM’s Parallel Events.

The Issues Paper’s main purpose is therefore to draw attention to key emerging trends, issues, policies, practices and challenges around the theme of the Conference, and to identify areas for further exploration by the Commonwealth Secretariat through the conference programme.

The 18CCEM will be the last Ministerial conference before 2015 by which date countries are expected to have met the internationally agreed goals in education ie the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The paper should note this fact, and the progress (or lack of progress) made by Commonwealth countries in education since the Jomtien Conference of 1990 and Dakar in 2000. It is therefore important that, in preparing for the 18CCEM Issues Paper, appropriate reference be made to previous themes, Issues Papers, Ministerial Communiqués, Action Plans and reports as well as wider reference materials such as the EFA Global Monitoring Reports etc.

However, the Issues Paper is also expected to remain forward looking. As Commonwealth countries strive to achieve global goals and targets by 2015, they should also bear in mind that in terms of education challenges, 2015 does not represent the ‘end of the road’. Given the persistent challenges in attaining the global education goals, Commonwealth commitment towards EFA and MDGs remain an unfinished business.

**KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED UNDER THE CONFERENCE THEME**

Many Commonwealth countries face challenges in providing access to quality education for all that fall outside these target oriented frameworks. For instance, most small states confront the challenge of providing schooling services in remote areas especially in the wake of high out-migration of teachers. Similarly, many developed and some developing countries in the Commonwealth are trying to meet the challenge of providing education to those with special needs, marginalised groups, and children in conflict and post conflict area and to increasingly multicultural societies. The consultant may identify other issues that have not been highlighted here.

The Commonwealth Secretariat will commission a separate review of the progress of Commonwealth countries against the MDG and EFA goals, so only a very brief establishment of the current context need be undertaken in the issues paper. The paper should highlight key issues that need to be addressed if Commonwealth countries which are still off track to meet these targets are to do so, along with successful approaches to meeting the MDG and EFA Goals, amidst widespread challenges.

The Commonwealth is a diverse group of 54 states, ranging from highly industrialised states that reached near-universal primary and secondary enrolment decades ago, to middle income countries that have achieved UPE but are in danger of regressing, to low income countries where the majority of children still do not complete primary school. The issues faced can therefore vary widely according to region, type of state (post conflict, small state etc), history and GDP.

The 18CCEM is being held in Africa, a region which has made significant progress in achieving the IAGs, but which also faces many challenges. The paper should take the full range of achievement and challenges within Commonwealth regions into account, looking at individual cases as well as aggregated results.

The 18CCEM Issues Paper should give special focus to regions and member states least likely to attain the education related MDGs and EFA goals by the agreed target dates, while reflecting the diversity of challenges.

Four Commonwealth countries, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, are major donors of bilateral and multilateral Overseas Development Assistance, including support for education in low and middle income Commonwealth countries. These donor countries, therefore, have a strong interest in issues affecting other Commonwealth countries that have not yet reached the EFA and MDG education related goals and targets. They have valuable domestic experience to share on quality and access in education as well as the integration of open, distance and technology-mediated learning strategies, but also face challenges found in other parts of the Commonwealth, such as the under achievement of boys and coping with the challenges of multiculturalism, where they can learn from best practice elsewhere.

This paper should aim to cover perspectives from all Commonwealth regions, and where possible identify areas that would benefit from Commonwealth wide action. To ensure that this is the case the Commonwealth Secretariat will form a peer review group with partners in the five regions of the Commonwealth to provide feedback to the author in the process of drafting the paper.

### **Issues emerging from the theme of 18CCEM**

The 18CCEM theme of "*Education in the Commonwealth: Bridging the Gap as we accelerate towards achieving International Agreed Goals (IAGs)*" is not a completely new topic. It builds on, and represents a natural continuation of the 17<sup>th</sup> CCEM theme: "*Education in the Commonwealth: beyond global goals and targets*".

Hence, in selecting the theme, the Commonwealth Secretariat intends to direct the debate towards how to best accelerate progress towards the internationally agreed goals in education, while at same time broadening the focus to issues that may have been marginalised by the global focus on the MDGs. Many of these issues may impact on the prospects of attaining and sustaining progress against the MDG and EFA goals.

The next Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers is being prepared amidst a global economic recession that threatens the recent trends and achievements in terms of domestic and international funding to education. While this situation has a major impact on one of the most productive ( but also highly vulnerable) forces of society, the Youth, it also has a direct bearing on women. Their chances of being better educated and trained are further constricted, with the consequent backlash on the potential gains their earlier access to education may have had—their contribution towards eradicating poverty, enhancing democracy and Peace, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality, among others.

The Issues Paper cannot neglect this overarching feature with potential negative impact on member countries, particularly those heavily dependent on overseas development assistance.

**The notion of ‘gap’ encapsulated in the conference theme has a dual dimension - quantitative and qualitative.** A number of developing Commonwealth countries are facing acute education challenges in enrolling all school age children; the persistent inequality in access to education still affects the traditional excluded groups – girls, poor, disabled, children with special educational needs, children in remote and rural areas and those in post-conflict areas. These factors prevent full access to universal primary education. In addition to the gap in achievement, with pupils leaving primary school without having attained the expected levels of knowledge and skill, there is also a lack of flexibility that would facilitate learner mobility from one sub-sector to another. Nor are pathways always available to facilitate the transition to vocational and technical education ( TVET) or, again, the reintegration of an academic/ general education stream.

Pupils’ learning achievement is often assessed in terms of acquisition of knowledge and skills in traditional school curriculum subjects, notably Language, Maths and Science, neglecting critical dimensions that contribute to enhance young people’s values and therefore their ability to live in a democratic society. It follows that an education system that fails to provide young people with socially accepted values, cannot be considered quality education. Lessons learned from global challenges facing humanity e.g. climate change, natural disasters, social and political conflicts, show that the ability of a human being to respond to these challenges requires more than just scientific knowledge. The unique strength of the Commonwealth family is its commitment to uphold fundamental values such as Peace, Democracy, Human Rights, Tolerance, Respect and Understanding, and Gender Equality.

The consultant will therefore be asked to look at progress in achievement of the IAGs not only in terms of quantitative results, but also through a more qualitative approach. This should assess the way in which programmes designed to achieve the IAGs have contributed to realising these fundamental values.

The expansion of education systems in the Commonwealth has followed different paths. In some countries the education MDGs are no longer a primary objective as many of them have achieved the quantitative aspects of the UPE and gender parity goals.

The EFA goals, which take a broader view of basic education beyond primary education alone, remain of direct relevance to all Commonwealth countries, with their emphasis on the learning needs of all ages with special reference to those who are most disadvantaged. Caring for the educational needs of young children and youth is a major policy issue in the United Kingdom just as it is in the island states of the Pacific. Enabling young people and out of work adults to learn new skills has taken on even greater urgency in times of recession and growing unemployment. Recognising the enormous economic and social deficits that result from the lack of basic literacy is a common Commonwealth challenge even if the scale of the problem varies hugely.

Forum debates will build on the main theme of the 18CCEM Conference while addressing specific issues arising from the forum theme and selected sub-themes.

### **The Ministerial Meeting**

The following themes are being proposed for the Ministerial meeting<sup>1</sup>;

#### **Focus and Showcase (Themes):**

- ICT (e-learning)
- Inclusion
  - Pre-Vocational
  - Vulnerable/Marginalized Groups
  - ECE/Development
- Special, Gifted & Talented Education
- Literacy & Numeracy (children, youth & adults)
- Small States/Climate Change Partnerships
- Achieving the MDGs & EFAs – success stories

---

<sup>1</sup> These themes are here wide -ranging still and the focus will soon be narrowed down to those that will form the basis for discussion during the Conference.

- Post Secondary and Higher Education

**Research Topics:**

- Boys' Underachievement/underperformance
- TVET- Skills Development (Youth)/establishment of pathways
- Gender classroom practices and school policies

**Round Table Topics:**

- Financing Education including Monitoring and Evaluation/Tracking
- Entrepreneurship
- Public/Private Partnership (PPP)
- Education & the World of Work
- Quality Teachers and School Leaders (standards, quality assurance and capacity building)
- CHOGM Mandates

**The Parallel Fora**

**Teachers' Forum**

Theme: Building the Future of the Commonwealth through Quality Education and Educators

The Teachers' Forum will highlight through its own theme and sub-themes that investing in competent and motivated teachers is key to endowing Commonwealth countries and citizens with the capacity for resilience in the face of change. The Teachers' Forum has selected four sub-themes to address the issues embraced in the main theme. They are:

- Indicators of Quality Education
- Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism and Professional Ethics
- Privatisation of Education

By focusing on quality issues, the debate will contribute to demonstrating that getting children into school is a necessary but not sufficient condition. The focus of the debate will therefore stress the positive correlation between teachers' quality and learning achievement.

**Stakeholders' Forum**

By bringing a diverse range of agencies and individuals with great expertise to share in delivering and supporting education, the Stakeholders' Forum provides a platform to deliberate on issues of relevance to Ministerial discussions.

The Stakeholders Forum theme "2015: Making it Happen" is closely aligned to the overall conference theme.

The debates will be structured around three clusters:

- Making Education Systems Better
- The Commonwealth Factor
- ICTs: Facilitating Education Transformation

Each includes sub-themes that will lead discussions towards the identification of challenges and opportunities facing countries to meet the global goals by 2015.

**Youth Forum**

Youth represents the future and continuity of the values and vision the Commonwealth stands for. Under the theme "*Be the Change Forum 2012: Youth, Voices and Visions for Education in the Commonwealth*", the Youth Forum will attract student leaders, students from all fields of education and specializations, successful young people educated outside formal system, youth with disabilities, and youth from marginalised groups. Education and Commonwealth Ministries of Education have a particular responsibility for providing young people with opportunities to explore and realise their full potential through formal, non-formal and alternative modes of education and training. The Youth Forum aims to discuss the challenges in the education system from the youth perspective and provide

Ministers and other participants at the CCEM with their views on the ways in which their expectations can be met. This will be articulated through the three selected sub-themes:

- Emphasizing Values in Education
- Engaging Student/Youth Voices in Education
- Sharing Visions for Education for the Future

### **Post Secondary and Higher Education Leaders' Forum**

This forum represents a shift in scope from the previous Vice-Chancellors' Forum. It will address a wider range of post secondary education issues. In embracing such an approach, the Post Secondary and Higher Education Leaders' Forum is expected to bridge a traditional policy gap between basic and high education, hence contributing to addressing comprehensively the 18CCEM theme.

Recent economic trends, exacerbated by the global financial and economic crisis, have led governments in both developed and developing countries to increasingly recognise the importance of post-secondary education in developing skills and technologies necessary for national economies to compete globally. Mismatch between the demand for relevant skills and competencies in the world of work and the type of education and skills supplied is an issue that needs to be addressed as well. Bringing together practitioners, academics and consumers of post-secondary education provides an exceptional opportunity to compare experience, highlight good practice and devise policy alternatives that they will be able to put directly to Ministers. In four distinct strands, the Forum will address the following specific questions:

- Access and Equity – Is Expansion 'Fair'?
- Expansion and the Demand from the Labour Market
- New Delivery Methods – What is working; what isn't?
- New Providers, New Relationships – The Role of the Private Sector

### **Methodology**

In interrogating the theme of "***Education in the Commonwealth: Bridging the Gap as we accelerate towards achieving internationally Agreed Goals (IAGs)***" the consultant should be guided by the above mentioned sub-themes and be free to highlight other sub-themes deemed of importance.

Throughout, efforts should be made to identify:

- Useful lessons and examples of successful policy and practice that could be replicated
- Areas that would benefit from Commonwealth action, agreement or cooperation

It would be beneficial to the conference if in identifying the issues particular attention be paid to the diverse players and interest groups in education in the Commonwealth today: Ministries of Education, Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning, Civil Society Organisations and Associations, the teaching profession and teachers' organisations, Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth Youth Programme, youth organizations, donor agencies etc.

Recommendations should be included

### **Length of Paper**

The consultant will draft one fully comprehensive paper. From this, a shorter version of not more than 15 pages will be generated for presentation to the Ministers. In addition, the consultant should produce an Executive Summary of 3-5 pages. Comsec will publish and circulate the full issues paper as a background paper for 18CCEM.

### **Timetable**

The consultant should submit the 1<sup>st</sup> draft to the Commonwealth Secretariat by end of April 2012. Comments from the Commonwealth Secretariat will be fed back to the consultant by mid May 2012. The final draft must be submitted to the Commonwealth Secretariat by end of June 2012.

### **Presentation of Issues Paper**

In addition to authoring the Issues Paper the consultant should be available to attend the 18CCEM, 27-31 August 2012, in Port Louis, Mauritius and be able to present the Issues Paper.

**Source Material**

The Commonwealth Secretariat will provide the consultant with relevant background materials including:

- Previous CCEM Issues Papers, Communiqués and Reports
- Recent Commonwealth Secretariat publications
- Recent documentation and publications from the Commonwealth of Learning, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Commonwealth Foundation

The consultant will be free to consult imminent persons in the education field in the Commonwealth to help him identify current issues.

**Other Suggested Documents**

- UNESCO EFA GMR Reports
- MDG Reports

**Funding**

The consultant will be paid a grant of £10,000 for this assignment.

Contact Information: Dr. Pauline Greaves  
p.greaves@commonwealth.int  
Telephone +44 020 7747 6294

14 December 2011

*Ministry of Education and Human Resources*

*MITD House, Pont Fer*

*Phoenix*



## **18<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION MINISTERS**

### **PROPOSED ISSUES PAPER OUTLINE**

#### 1. Preamble

- Background
  - i. the supply and training of teachers,
  - ii. technical [vocational]
  - iii. social education and
  - iv. the education of rural communities.
  - v. Commonwealth scholarships
- Achievements
  - i. Celebration of accomplishments
- Looking Forward
  - i. Reflection on challenges to fulfilling of aspirations
  - ii. Reinvention in response to transformative forces

#### 2. Introduction

- A conference taking place at a time that nations are taking stock of their achievements in the MDG/EFA context as 2015 nears
- A conference that is taking place at a time of great uncertainties with regard to climate change, financial systems, food insecurity
- A conference that must take note of new and emerging Global changes and challenges (see 3 below)

#### 3. Global changes and challenges requiring a response from Education [defining a central role for ministers of education] around:

- How can sustainable development be achieved for all?
- How can everyone have sufficient clean water without conflict?
- How can population growth and resources be brought into balance?
- How can genuine democracy emerge from authoritarian regimes?
- How can policymaking be made more sensitive to global long-term perspectives?
- How can ethical market economies be encouraged to help reduce the gap between rich and poor?
- How can scientific and technological breakthroughs be accelerated to improve the human condition?
- How can ethical considerations become more routinely incorporated into global decisions?

#### 4. Imagining the Future of Education in the Commonwealth in the context of Global driving forces in education:

- Transition from Teaching to Learning
- Exponential Growth of Information
- Expanding Gap Between Literates and Super-Literates
- Our “Touch Points” for Interfacing with Society are Changing
- Learning Drivers

- The Age of Hyper-Individuality
- Transition from Consumers to Producer
- Demography
- Diversity
- Market and other economic forces
- System Deregulation
- Newer technologies universe

5. Responding to Change

- School education [access, quality and retention]
- Skills Education [review, rethink and rearrange]
- Teacher Training [improve, increase and invest]
- Higher Education [enhance, engage and empower]
- Learning through life [enable]

6. Moving forward beyond goals

- New structures for a new age of learning
- The learner in a global society and tailoring learning to the individual
- The technologies for learning and teaching
- Re inventing the learning environment
- Reinventing learning and teaching
- Towards a lifelong learning system

**Proposed Structure of the Issues Paper**

The proposed structure should include the following;

- i) contents
- ii) list of acronyms
- iii) introduction
- iv) executive summary
- v) background
- vi) identification of issues
- vii) analysis of issues, solutions and challenges
- viii) recommendations
- viii) conclusion
- ix) bibliography
- x) appendices